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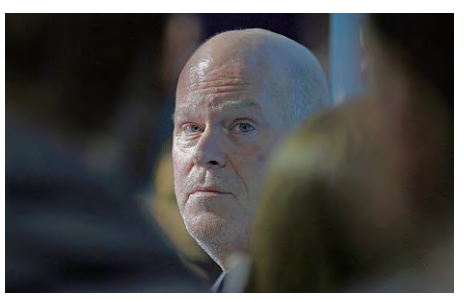
Hornets coach Steve Clifford talks health after medical leave 1B



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LOCAL

MLK HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Beginning Saturday, thousands will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy at a parade and in other events. **8A**

NATION & WORLD

TRUMP ISSUES VAGUE DENIAL

Sen. Dick Durbin said Friday the president did use derogatory language in reference to African nations. **9A**

LOCAL

NC CHARTER SCHOOL BOOM

A report tallies the "significant negative fiscal" cost of such facilities to traditional public school systems. **8A**

Police sought murder suspect; instead, he found them first

DAVIE HINSHAW dhinsaw@charlotteobserver.com

Jonathan Bennett fired into the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department headquarters in uptown Charlotte. He was shot dead.

BY JOE MARUSAK AND MARK PRICE
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A homicide suspect being sought by police ambushed officers outside the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department headquarters late Thursday, shooting one officer in the leg before being killed by return fire.

"He ambushed us," police Chief Kerr Putney told reporters.

Court records show the suspect, 23-year-old Jonathan Bennett, was due to stand trial Feb. 7 for felony probation violation in connection with a 2017 incident.

Jonathan Bennett

Just before 11 p.m., officers from the North Tryon Division and N.C. Probation and Parole were in the CMPD parking lot when Bennett arrived in a white car, Putney said.

The group of six to eight officers was being briefed on an unrelated investigation in the parking lot when Bennett started shooting, the chief said.

One CMPD officer, Casey Shue, was taken to Carolinas Medical Center with a gunshot wound to the leg, police said. The injury is not life-threatening. Shue was hired on July 21, 2014, and is assigned to the North Tryon Division Crime Reduction Unit.

Two CMPD officers and two probation officers fired back and critically wounded Bennett. He was taken to Carolinas Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead, Putney said. The CMPD officers have been identified as Jeffrey Zederbaum and Jared Decker. Zederbaum was hired in 2009 and Decker was hired on July 21, 2014.

Bennett was a suspect in the fatal shooting of Brittany White, also 23, earlier Thursday in west Charlotte. Bennett and White were the parents of an infant daughter, and Bennett took the child with him after that shooting, police said. The daughter was later found safe.

Putney said it was doubtful that there would be any body camera footage from the shooting outside CMPD headquarters because it was an ambush.

"Times like this make you

SEE SUSPECT, 2A

MORE INSIDE

Officer shot in ambush has a history of confronting city's criminals. 11A

NC maps ruled unconstitutional gerrymanders, but GOP lawyer wants them used again in 2018

BY ANNE BLYTHE
ablythe@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH

Republican lawmakers are appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court to block the ruling this week that struck down North Carolina's congressional districts – at least temporarily – and they want an answer by Jan. 22.

Phil Strach, the Raleigh-based attorney representing Republican lawmakers in the partisan gerrymandering case, stated in his 22-page request for an emergency stay on the order issued Tuesday that a three-judge panel "has used an entirely novel legal theory to hopelessly disrupt North Carolina's upcoming congressional elections."

On Tuesday, a panel of three federal judges ruled that in 2016, the Republican-led General Assembly in North Carolina unconstitutionally gerrymandered the state's 13 congressional districts to ensure the party's "domination of the state's congressional delegation."

The judges – James Wynn, a Barack Obama appointee to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and U.S. District Judges W. Earl Britt, a Jimmy Carter appointee, and William Osteen Jr., a George W. Bush appointee – gave the lawmakers until Jan. 24 to adopt new maps, which are to be turned in to the court with a record of any hearings by Jan. 29.

The filing period for candidates in the 2018 elections in North Carolina is set to open Feb. 12.

"Prohibiting the state from using the duly enacted districting map that governed its last election cycle is not just practically disruptive, but represents a grave and irreparable sovereign injury," Strach stated in the request for intervention.

WISCONSIN, MARYLAND AND NC ARGUMENTS

Additionally, Strach contended, blocking the effects of the order by the three judges would be in keeping with what the high court had done in a Wisconsin case that tests the breadth to which lawmakers can redistrict for partisan gain. That case points to the "efficiency gap," a theory that gerrymanders force the disadvantaged party to "waste" votes. Voters are shifted into districts where their votes won't matter, either because their party's candidate can't win or is already sure to win.

The lawmakers' attorney also mentioned a Maryland redistricting case in which Republican

SEE GERRYMANDERS, 2A

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